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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/620,632	07/16/2003	Horst Henn	IL920030022US1	1717
7590 10/29/2008				
Stephen C. Kaufman Intellectual Property Law Dept. IBM Corporation P.O. Box 218 Yorktown Heights, NY 10598				
EXAMINER ROBERTSON, DAVID				
ART UNIT 2121		PAPER NUMBER		
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**Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.**

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

### Office Action Summary

**Application No.**

10/620,632

**Applicant(s)**

HENN ET AL.

**Examiner**

Dave Robertson

**Art Unit**

3623

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --  
**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

**Status**

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 15 June 2008.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

**Disposition of Claims**

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 14-23 and 34-46 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 14-23 and 34-46 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

**Application Papers**

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

**Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119**

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

**Attachment(s)**

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/S5108)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 12/13/2004.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application.
- 6) ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_.

### **DETAILED ACTION**

1. This is a Final office action in response to Applicant's reply of 6/15/2008. Claims 14-23 and 34-46 are pending.

#### ***Response to Amendment***

2. Examiner notes that the last two claims in the claims listing as amended are both numbered "45" (claim 46 is assumed the intended numbering of the last claim).
3. Applicant cancels claims 1-13 and 24-33, adding claims 34-36 depending from claim 14 and new claims 37-46 containing subject matter substantially as previously presented.

#### ***Response to Arguments***

4. Applicant's arguments filed 6/15/2008 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive:

Applicant argues Hirose (US Pat. 5,710,921) does not teach or even consider a "collaboration system" or as in claim 14, *in one screen, providing an interface to a workflow system ... and a collaboration system*.

Examiner respectfully disagrees: Hirose teaches a workflow system. The express purpose of a workflow system is for multiple actors (people and machines) to work together, i.e. *collaborate*, on a complex project. Broadly interpreted, without further specific definition (and recitation) of acts and functions of a collaboration system different from the collaboration that occurs in a workflow system, Hirose's system and

user interfaces to the system (see column 6 from line 10), are by design workflow and collaboration systems.

Applicant similarly argues as for claim 37 now reciting *a collaboration system within which any actor of a current instance of a selected workflow can collaborate with any other actor of said instance*.

However, workflow as in Hirose and in the art in general is a process involving multiple actors, in which in any instance of a workflow is a collaboration with other actors of the workflow instance. Therefore, again Hirose teaches a workflow and collaboration system at least with respect to the broad claims of the present invention.

5. Accordingly, the grounds of rejection over all claims as in the prior office action are maintained, updated for the new claims added by amendment.

#### ***Claim Objections***

6. Claim(s) 45 are objected to because of the following informalities: the last two claims in the claims listing as amended are both numbered "45"

Appropriate correction is required.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102***

2. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

3. Claims 14-23 and 34-46 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Hirose (U.S. 5,710,921).

Claim 14

Hirose teaches *in one screen, providing an interface to a workflow system for performing a selected workflow and an interface to a collaboration system within which actors of a current instance of a selected workflow can collaborate* (col. 5, lines 55-58; Figure 2; system includes a user interface that allows persons in charge of workflow steps to manage the workflows).

Claim 15

Hirose teaches *wherein said actors comprise at least one of the following: workflow actors and external actors* (col. 5, lines 64-66; col. 6, lines 31-32).

Claim 16

Hirose teaches *notifying at least one workflow actor that a work item is waiting for him/her to act upon* (col. 6, lines 22-25).

Claim 17

Hirose teaches *wherein said notifying comprises producing a hyperlink to said awaiting work item* (col. 6, lines 63-66; a person interacts with the user interface to

Art Unit: 3623

manage the workflow; interacting with the interface provides the user with links/buttons/icons to select to indicate various states of the workflow).

Claim 18

Hirose teaches *accumulating correspondences of said actors when performing said current instance of said selected workflow* (col. 12, lines 41-44 and 56-58; col. 12, line 66-col. 13, line 4).

Claim 19

Hirose teaches *sending a hyperlink to a location where a workflow actor may process a work item* (col. 6, lines 63-66 and as above in claim 17).

Claim 20

Hirose teaches *wherein said accumulating comprises transferring control of a work item from a first workflow actor to a second workflow actor* (col. 13, lines 28-64; Figure 6).

Claim 21

Hirose teaches *providing a contact list of at least of some of said actors to said collaboration system* (col. 6, lines 31-35; Figure 6).

Claim 22

Hirose teaches *wherein said second providing comprises activating a staff resolution component of said workflow system to determine said actors for said current workflow* (col. 6, lines 31-35; col. 7, lines 24-29).

Claim 23

Hirose teaches *wherein said activating comprises selecting a portion of said actors according to a current work item to be performed* (col. 6, lines 31-35; col. 7, lines 24-29).

Claim 34

Hirose teaches *wherein said providing comprises providing a support interface per support application wherein said support application supports said performing of said work of said selected workflow* (see Figure 1 "User Interface" and related discussion, the user interface supporting the "support applications" of the workflow management user interface).

Claim 35

Hirose teaches *wherein each said interface includes a portlet* (col. 5, line 59-col. 6, line 3; Figures 1-2 "User Interface").

Claim 36

Hirose teaches *wherein said support interface includes a portlet* (col. 5, line 59-col. 6, line 3; Figures 1-2 "User Interface").

Claim 37

Hirose teaches *in one screen, providing an interface to a workflow system for performing a selected workflow and an interface to a collaboration system within which any actor of a current instance of a selected workflow can collaborate with any other actor of said instance* (col. 5, lines 55-58; Figure 2; a user interface that allows persons in charge of workflow steps to manage the workflows, and further, *workflow* in Hirose

Art Unit: 3623

and in the art in general is a process involving multiple actors in which any instance of a workflow is a collaboration with other actors of the workflow instance such that any actors may collaborate with any of the other actors of the workflow.)

Claim 38

Hirose teaches *within said workflow system, enabling said actors to be defined and providing a list of said actors of a current instance of a selected workflow to a collaboration system* (col. 5, lines 55-58; Figure 2; a user interface that allows persons in charge of workflow steps to manage the workflows, including defining and listing actors to be involved in the workflow).

Claim 39

Hirose teaches *wherein said actors comprise at least one of the following: workflow actors and external actors* (col. 5, lines 64-66; col. 6, lines 31-32).

Claim 40

Hirose teaches *notifying at least one workflow actor that a work item is waiting for him/her to act upon* (col. 6, lines 22-25).

Claim 41

Hirose teaches *wherein said notifying comprises producing a hyperlink to said awaiting work item* (col. 12, lines 41-44 and 56-58; col. 12, line 66-col. 13, line 4).

Claim 42

Hirose teaches *accumulating correspondences of said actors when performing said current instance of said selected workflow* (col. 12, lines 41-44 and 56-58; col. 12, line 66-col. 13, line 4).



Claim 43

Hirose teaches *wherein said accumulating comprises sending a hyperlink to a location where a workflow actor may process a work item* (col. 6, lines 63-66; a person interacts with the interface to manage the workflow; interacting with the interface is in a sense providing the user with links/buttons/icons to select to indicate various states of the workflow).

Claim 44

Hirose teaches *wherein said accumulating comprises transferring control of a work item from a first workflow actor to a second workflow actor* (col. 13, lines 28-64; Figure 6).

Claim 45

Hirose teaches *activating a staff resolution component of said workflow system to determine said actors for said current workflow* (col. 6, lines 31-35; col. 7, lines 24-29).

Claim 46 [45]

Hirose teaches *wherein said activating comprises selecting a portion of said actors according to a current work item to be performed* (see Figure 2 and column 6 from line 31: the user management section selects users in charge of steps to perform the "current work", the person(s) in charge selected are a "portion" of said actors).

***Conclusion***

4. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure:

Botscheck et al. (US Pat. 7,340,679) teaches automated methods and a system for task-based collaborations, including an interface (**Figure 2**) providing "on one screen" both workflow and collaborative interfaces to person(s) active in group-collaborative task activities.

Porcari et al. (US 2004/0025048) discloses automated methods and a system for collaborative online legal workflows, including an internet portal-based user/group interface.

Art Unit: 3623

7. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Art Unit: 3623

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Dave Robertson whose telephone number is (571)272-8220. The examiner can normally be reached on 9 am to 5 pm, M-F.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Albert Decady can be reached on (571) 272-3819. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Dave Robertson/  
Examiner, Art Unit 2121

/Beth V. Boswell/  
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 3623